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BETTER LIBRARIES NEEDED

A VISION OF USEFULNESS

Four North Carolina librarians returning from the annual meeting of the American Library Association at Swampscott, Mass., a seashore resort twelve miles out of Boston, came back to their posts on July 1 with an enlarged vision of the usefulness of the library as an effective American educational institution. After having fellowshipped with some 1950 librarians from all parts of the country and having visited the libraries of Boston and its environs, they were more heartily in accord than ever with Thomas Carlyle's dictum that a library is the people's university. In view of the fact that North Carolina's library resources, including public, college and university, State and Supreme Court, and rural school libraries, total only approximately 1,125,000 volumes, they were doubly convinced that more such universities should be open to the state and that more North Carolinians should matriculate in them!

Every Town Has Library

The News Letter hasn't all the facts concerning Massachusetts libraries at its finger tips. But it has the one fact which is the boast of every Massachusetts librarian, namely, that every town in Massachusetts save one maintains a free public library, and that one is served by a branch library of a neighboring city.

Donated by Residents

The second fact of which the Massachusetts librarian boasts is that the local library building is, in the majority of instances, the gift of a citizen, who, true to the New England habit of leaving something to Harvard, or Yale, or some other institution, cannot die happy without making the local community his beneficiary. "Let me build it", instead of "let Carnegie build it", has been the prevailing Massachusetts library motto, with the result that the libraries of Massachusetts cities corresponding to Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Hendersonville, and Winston-Salem, and of colleges like the University of North Carolina and Davidson and the North

Carolina College for Women and Guilford and Rutherford bear the name of some citizen of the local community or state rather than that of the Laird of Skibo. In this respect the Pages, of Aberdeen, Pack, of Asheville, Duke, of Trinity, and Raney, of Raleigh, have followed the prevailing New England custom and that too to their own honor and the very great good of their home towns and institutions.

Large Book Collections

A very distinctive feature of the New England library is the size of its book collection. North Carolina press notices of July 8 and 9 carried the news that the \$75,000 Carnegie Library of Durham had just opened with 8,000 books on the shelves and that the early addition of 1,000 new volumes was contemplated. Beverly, Massachusetts, some twenty-odd miles out of Boston, with a population of 22,561—near enough that of Durham for the sake of comparison—has 43,000 volumes in its public library and has an income sufficient to provide a steady increase of new publications. Similarly, Salem, Massachusetts, with a population of 42,529, which is about the same as that of Charlotte and less than that of Winston-Salem, maintains the library of the Essex Institute, with more than 500,000 volumes; the Salem public library, with 70,000 volumes; the Salem Athenaeum, with 20,000 volumes; and the law library of Essex county court house, with 30,000 volumes. Compared with these the Carnegie library and the Salem Academy and College library of Winston-Salem contain 10,554 and 7,226 volumes respectively and the Carnegie Library of Charlotte contains 10,396. Statistics for the law libraries for Forsyth and Mecklenburg counties are not available, but in neither instance would the number run as high as the 30,000 in the Essex county court house, which far and away exceeds the 6,500 volumes in the law library of the University of North Carolina and the 22,616 volumes in the library of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

Rich Background Given

North Carolinians who followed the campaigns for higher education waged in the state recently by both church and state institutions will recall that it was repeatedly urged that the colleges needed enlarged funds in order that they might furnish among other things an enriched cultural background for their student bodies. The same might be urged with equal truth today in the case of North Carolina libraries. Unfortunately, and unlike their Massachusetts contemporaries, their incomes are too scant to furnish this. Collections of musical scores, musical records, stereopticon views, lantern slides, prints, and pictures are almost entirely wanting in North Carolina libraries, and even special collections of local history and museum material which the New Englander has preserved in infinite variety is wanting, save in a few notable examples such as the Greensboro public library, the North Carolina Room of the University library, the State library, and the North Carolina Historical Commission and Hall of History. Obviously the 48 North Carolina public libraries which according to the latest report of the North Carolina Library Commission had a total of only 172,911 volumes, and the 21 college and university libraries having only 233,054 volumes, cannot and do not furnish the wealth of books and periodicals and pictures and objects of local historical interest essential to a rich and colorful library offering. Furthermore, they cannot, and will not, until the communities and institutions themselves put more money into the collections and individual citizens open up their pocket books and provide these distinctive specialties. Long ago it was demonstrated that you could not make brick without straw. It ought to be clear today that you cannot run effective libraries without books.

Libraries Help Win Trade

But possibly the most surprising use of the library in New England is that in the field of industry. The New Englander has long since recognized the use of books, magazine articles, and press clippings as absolutely indispensable as a means of winning and holding trade. As a result, the Special Libraries Association of Boston alone comprises a membership of 117 special libraries, and some 1,300-odd librarians throughout the North and Central West hold membership in the Special Libraries Association of America. The first of the Boston list, the Aberthaw Construction Company, which recently came into North Carolina and surveyed a building program involving the expenditure of a million or more dollars, maintains a highly specialized collection on engineering, construction, concrete, and industrial management. Infinite data on these subjects is available, in the light of which the firm is able to give its patrons an exact program of procedure. Similarly, the Roger W. Babson Statistical Organization specializes in financial statistics and business. The Boston Society of Civil Engineers maintains a collection of 10,000 volumes and 3,000 pamphlets on municipal, state, and federal engineering, engineering text books, and engineering periodicals, and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society places 23,000 volumes on agriculture, horticulture, and landscape gardening at the disposal of its members. The shoe and electric industries of Lynn, the jewelry manufacturers of Providence, the cutlery factories of New Britain, the textile mills of Lowell, all maintain complete technical libraries; and instead of scrapping them as non-essentials at the beginning of the present period of depression, have increased the use of them and their group of experts in finding a lower cost production of their wares—a thing which North Carolinians who produce and manufacture cotton goods, and woolens, and tobacco, and furniture, etc., must consider and employ if they continue to compete successfully with their Northern competitors. The present market is certainly not one in which the hit or miss method can safely be employed, and the New Englander is taking no chances.

Harvard Library Visited

One of the libraries officially visited by all the librarians at the Swampscott meeting was that of Harvard University, housed in the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial building completed in 1915. Young Widener, who was a collector of rare editions in the field of English literature, lost his life on the fateful Titanic and the building, which contains the collection assembled by him and now preserved in the famous Widener room, was erected in his memory by his mother. It also contains the College library, founded in 1638, of 1,094,200 volumes, and its administration is combined with that of eleven distinctive departmental libraries and thirty-one special libraries housed in other buildings. The total collection, as analyzed in a recent handbook issued by the University, is as follows:

College Library	1,094,200
Law School	208,300
Andover-Harvard Library	175,500
Museum of Comparative Zool-	
ogy	117,200
Peabody Museum	15,800
Astronomical Observatory	51,900
Herbarium	30,500
Arnold Arboretum	40,900
Bussey Institution	26,300
Medical School	96,700
Dental School	2,900
Blue Hill Observatory	23,600
Special Libraries	184,300
Total	2,018,100

From 40,000 to 60,000 volumes are ordinarily added to the whole collection by gift and purchase each year.

The University Library

Two hundred and twenty-one years after the founding of the Bray Library at Bath (the first to be founded in the state) and one hundred and twenty-seven years after the laying of the corner stone of the Old East building (the first to be erected on the campus of the University), North Carolina has finally achieved the distinction of having built up within her borders a library of 100,000 volumes—the library of the University, which, on June 15, 1921, passed this mark and began to climb from 100,000 to 1,000,000 which it must attain if the University is to become the dominant University of the South and the State is to be placed in the list of those commonwealths which give due

consideration to the value of books in the life of an educated citizenship.

Although the state has taken twenty-two decades to achieve this result, there is ground for optimism in the fact that 61,507 of these 100,000 volumes have been added within the last two decades, and that 39,738 of the 61,507 have been added since June 15, 1911—ten years ago. North Carolina's book curve, which, for two centuries, could scarcely be distinguished from a straight line, has, latterly, taken a sharp turn upward!

COUNTY LIBRARY A SUCCESS

Books for everybody is the significant slogan of the American Library Association today. Since 1900 this organization has been steadily on the job of putting every man, woman, and child in the country districts to reading books that instruct, delight, and inspire.

In the main, four agencies have been developed and employed in this effort: (1) The Free Public Library, or a library in every village as in the case of thickly populated Massachusetts; (2) the School Library, such as that to be found in 4,686 North Carolina schools, with a total of from 350,000 to 600,000 books in the hands of the school children and their parents; (3) the Traveling Library, operated by a central library commission and going into every rural community which shows sufficient interest to apply for service; and (4) the County Library, established, supported, and administered by the county with branches and parcels post service in every section, of which California furnishes the most successful type.

Of these four agencies, the last mentioned, though least understood in North Carolina, is the one most stressed at the Swampscott meeting, and is described here for the consideration of North Carolinians who would see the state develop most effectively a reading citizenship.

Special Characteristics

The three predominant characteristics of the county library are:

1. It serves the citizenship of an entire county rather than of a town or city.
2. It is supported by a direct tax (usually not less than one and one-fourth cents nor more than 5 cents on the \$100) on the total assessed property of the county, or an appropriation is made by the county commissioners to a library already established by a town within it, in return for which books are made available to town and county citizens alike.



3. It is administered by a special library board similar to the county board of education, which may receive lands, buildings, gifts, books, etc., for the use of the library, choose the librarian and assistants, determine the number and location of branch libraries or loan stations throughout the county, or contract with a library already in the county for services to the entire citizenship.

Distinctive Advantages

That a strong centralized library thus provided for affords its patrons distinctive advantages is at once apparent. These are:

1. It has financial support sufficient to provide books of a varying character and in sufficient quantity to meet the requirements of all classes of citizens.

2. It can establish a unified system of service to isolated settlements, schools, and villages, thereby reaching at regular intervals every section of the county. A book wagon or automobile can be run on a regular fortnightly schedule, and can serve every local station.

3. It can employ an efficient librarian and assistants in sufficient number to administer the work effectively.

4. It lends itself to the uses of other county organizations, such as the board of health and the board of education.

5. It promotes unity of interest and cooperation in all undertakings having as their object the betterment of the county.

State Agencies Employed

In North Carolina, at present, three of the agencies mentioned above are generally employed. According to the latest statistics published by the North Carolina Library Commission (for 1919) and the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (for 1920), 48 towns

operate public libraries, 4,686 schools have collections of from 85 to 125 books, and the North Carolina Library Commission in the biennium 1919-1920, operated 831 traveling libraries in 620 communities in 92 of the 100 North Carolina counties.

County Work Begun

The county library of a modified type has also been successfully tested in North Carolina. In October, 1912, Mecklenburg county, through the county board of education, appropriated \$300 annually to the support of the Carnegie library of Charlotte. In return, the use of the library was made available to the teachers of the county, and during the two and a quarter years of service 7,000 volumes were circulated in rural districts. In January, 1915, the plan was abandoned because the support was too inadequate to secure the results desired.

Durham County Sticks

In Durham county the board of county commissioners have been the contracting parties. In April, 1914, they appropriated \$400 and today the appropriation is \$1,333.33. East and West Durham are served, the latter having a branch library supported in conjunction with the Erwin Mills; and Lowes Grove, Union, Mineral Springs, and Patrick Henry stations have received special collections, the teachers at these places having served as librarians. All the county schools have made use of the city library for reference and debate and essay material and individuals from every section of the county constantly borrow books.

Guilford Leads

Guilford county followed suit in 1915 with an appropriation of \$1,250 later raised to \$1,500, the combined appropriations from city and county being \$7,500 at present. For 10 months the county support was discontinued, but through the personal contributions of Mr. E. P. Whorton, of Greensboro, county service was not allowed to lapse. Today twelve stations carefully located throughout the county distribute books, and teachers, students, and citizens from all sections draw books from the city library. The total county loans amount to ten or twelve thousand volumes annually and the county is unanimous in its praise of the service.

Small Tax Will Do

In these three instances the cost has been only a fraction of one cent on the \$100 worth of property, and for a tax of one cent every county in North Carolina could maintain, in conjunction with its principal town or county seat, a county-wide library with an income from \$285 in Clay to \$14,722 in Forsyth, whose assessed valuations in 1920 were the lowest and highest respectively in the state. People's universities of this sort certainly should be established, and every North Carolinian should at once become a regular matriculate in them.

The Law in the Case

The General Assembly of North Carolina has enacted the following law relative to county libraries:

Section I. That the board of county commissioners and the county board of education of any county in which there is a public city or town library are hereby authorized and empowered in their discretion, to cooperate with the trustees of said library in extending the service of such library to the rural communities of the county, and to appropriate out of the funds under their control an amount sufficient to pay the expense of such library extension service.

Section 2. This act shall be in force from and after its ratification.

Ratified this the 5th day of March, A. D. 1917.—L. R. W.

